

A Compassionate View of 'Che' Soc. 4.01.4 Che!

A major Hollywood studio, 20th Century Fox, is shelling out millions for a cinematic epic lionizing the fanatic Communist guerrilla, Che Guevara.

Those behind the film make no bones that it is tribute to Guevara, who was killed last year leading an insurrection in Bolivia. "If at the end of this thing you have compassion for this man I'll be very happy," says director Richard Fleischer, whose other films include "The Boston Strangler." "Che was an idealist who died for his ideals, and to me that's a heroic thing."



GUEVARA

Matinee idol Omar Sharif, who plays Che, and others in the cast say the film will stress these supposed Guevara qualities: idealism, dedication, courage, intelligence and incorruptibility.

"A whole younger generation is anti-American," Sharif said last week. "Not anti-American but anti-Establishment American, and Che Guevara is the ultimate anti-Establishment figure. All over the world they have come to believe this is a correct position to take."

The film, to be called "Che!", is being shot in Hollywood and Puerto Rico, and will include lurid "atrocities" allegedly committed by pro-American dictator Fulgencio Batista but acted out by professional stunt men. Patriots are hung from village squares, helpless women are clubbed to the streets, teen-agers are cruelly tortured. No shots of Castro or Guevara atrocities are included.

Perhaps Sharif knew what he was talking about when he told *Newsweek's* Joseph Morgenstern: "To say the film is 100 per cent honest is absurd. It's being made by a bunch of capitalists."